HUMAN EVENTS

Vol. XIII, No. 32 Saturday, August 11, 1956 Washington, D. C.

News Section *Printed in Two Sections*

From Crisis to Crisis: Observers say both the Chinese push into Burma and the Suez Canal seizure are part of a general Communist offensive strategy. They reason that we are now reaping the fruits of an "appeasement" policy which the Communists believe will keep the West from getting tough no matter what the Reds or their allies do.

Burma, it is conceded here, has long been the likely "next" on the Communist time-table; the only question was when the Reds would move. Opinion is almost unanimous that the recent invasions, like the Indo-Chinese War, would never have occurred if MacArthur had had his way in Korea. Even the Alsops came around to this view. "The free world," the brothers wrote June 13, 1954, "would not now be menaced with a catastrophe in Asia if MacArthur had won his fight against the artificial limits of the Korean War."

Suez: Harry Truman should be reminded of his proposal at Potsdam in 1945. According to his *Memoirs*, Truman presented "a paper proposing free access to all the seas of the world by Russia and by all other countries." This "access," he said, would be "guaranteed by all of us," and would include the Suez and Panama Canals as well as the Kiel canal, the Rhine-Danube waterway and the Dardanelles. This suggestion was a forerunner of the British withdrawal, agreed to October 19, 1954 (under constant American pressure), which left the Suez open to Nasser's brigandage.

Panama next? Truman's proposal also foreshadowed the current Russian drive (now being seconded by Panama and the Latin-American press) to equate the Suez situation with that in Panama, where American interests are vital. A huge fleet of merchantmen bearing the Panama flag is among the heaviest users of Suez, and Panamanians are boiling at not having been invited to the 24-nation conference to discuss the Nasser-provoked difficulties. In an official communique, Panama's President Arias observed that "the Panama Canal is of vital importance to this country, and bears analogies, at various levels, to the Suez Canal."

Where Socialism Leads: Proof that a nation's domestic policies influence its foreign affairs is shown by a letter written by Fayez A. Sayegh, Acting Director of the Arab States Delegation Office, in the Washington *Daily News*, August 7. Since the "seizure" of the Suez Canal is really "nationalization," writes Sayegh, the Western nations should not object. "Those colonial powers (France and England) who have been loudest in their condemnation of Egypt have themselves taken the lead in nationalization." (For instance, the British Labor Government nationalized coal, steel and transportation.)

Congressional Fury: Our survey by long-distance telephone of the sentiment found by House and Senate GOP members in their constituencies indicates a cold fury at Harold Stassen's "dump-Nixon" drive that is unmatched in recent Congressional history.

The intensity of their emotions (180 out of 202 GOP House members signed a petition supporting Nixon) is due to their recognition of the mortal injury that may be done to the party's chances in November, and especially of the repercussion upon their own chances of the Stassen campaign.

But — say the Congressmen — the campaign may convince millions of voters that Ike's health is far worse than has been told, and so may cost millions of votes regardless of the identity of the second place candidate. (See also Childe Harold's Pilgrimage on page 4.)

The Washington press corps has despaired of getting any substantial evidence from the wily Stassen about "popular support" for Herter. Pressed at a news conference for his reasons for disliking Nixon as the candidate, Childe Harold

Published weekly at 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
Copyright 1956 by HUMAN EVENTS, INC.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stuck to his contention that the voters don't like Nixon, and that a mysterious poll revealed that an Eisenhower-Nixon ticket would suffer a net loss of "six per cent" from an Eisenhower-Herter ticket. Stassen fended off the Fourth Estate for a solid hour by saying: "I will not be drawn into the kind of discussion you are trying to draw me into." His caginess on the credentials of his pollsters, and about the size of the samples used, confirms opinion here that the "poll" was a phony.

Liberal GOP Governor Dumped: The defeat of Governor Fred Hall in the Kansas state primaries is a bitter blow to the GOP's "liberals." Hall has been one of their shining lights. He favored Chief Justice Warren for the presidency if Ike did not run and was violently antagonistic to the Knowland-Goldwater-Bridges wing of the party.

Hall incurred widespread enmity throughout his home state when, on March 28, 1955, he vetoed a "right to work" bill passed by the state legislature. The action was typical of his policies generally as Governor, all of which tended toward expedient bows to labor unions and "liberals."

The true measure of the antipathy Hall's liberalism engendered is the fact that this 1956 primary is the first time in 26 years that a Republican Governor has been refused a renomination. The winner, State Representative Warren W. Shaw, was the only one of four GOP candidates who espoused the "right to work" law in the campaign.

There were two Kansas Congressional primaries in which "liberal" Republicans sought to unseat conservatives. Both efforts lost. The winners were Rep. Wint Smith of the Sixth District and Rep. Myron B. George of the Third District.

Stevenson "Wrap It Up" Drive: Stevenson's aides are imitating the Brownell technique of seeking to wrap up the nomination before the first ballot. Brownell, in 1944 and 1948 when he was Dewey's campaign manager, and in 1952 when he was Ike's, followed the policy: Take no chances on last-minute mob psychology upsetting the apple-cart; make — quickly — whatever deals are necessary to clinch the nomination. Adlai's aides whispered in Kefauver's ears the possibilities of the No. 2 spot and they are now telling Harriman, "Beat the favorite sons to the switch and you can be Secretary of State."

Much as Harriman would like the coveted State Department post, he may sacrifice that chance for a last desperate effort for the presidency. In that case, his hopes rest on the possibility that a floor fight for an uncompromising civil rights plank will crack the Stevenson lineup.

No. 2 Spot: On the assumption that Stevenson already is as good as nominated, he is being besieged by Democrats who regard themselves as the ideal running-mate for him.

Cynical observers, however, regard as sheer window-dressing the fact that Stevenson, acting on the same cited assumption, is seeking advice from numerous Democratic leaders as to who would make the best vice-presidential nominee. These disbelievers feel the deal was set when Senator Estes Kefauver pulled out of the presidential race and threw his support to the Illinoisan.

Less suspicious observers feel that while the odds are heavily weighted in favor of a deal having been made, it may well have been for Kefauver to turn up in a Cabinet post (he long has yearned to be Attorney General).

Most prominently mentioned are Senators Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, with New York City's Mayor Robert F. Wagner not far behind. Kennedy and Wagner supporters argue that there are more Catholics in the U.S.A. than farmers. They contend that Catholics were largely Democrats until about 1946 when the "softness toward Communism" issue shook them loose. Ike won millions of Catholic votes in 1952, but has since antagonized them by his attitude toward Senator McCarthy. If the Democrats nominate a Catholic for the vice-presidency — say the Kennedy-Wagner supporters — they will return to the party of their fathers. Furthermore, they are concentrated in the big-city states needed by the Democrats if they are to have a chance.

States' Rights: A letter by Senator Richard Russell of Georgia to Governor George Bell Timmerman, Jr., of South Carolina has received little attention in the North. In part, it said:

"I regard the decision of the Supreme Court in the school cases as a legal monstrosity dictated by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

expediency and personal views rather than a regard for established law. . . .

"If the South does not present a solid front, we will eventually be engulfed in the evil consequences which will naturally flow from this unconstitutional abuse of power. . . .

"If the South had presented a solid front in the Congress on every issue involving the rights of the states, we might have prevented this decision. We have been fairly solid in the Congress when confronted with force bills involving racial questions, but on many other issues we have had quite a few 'Saturday night' state righters who have tried to have their cake and eat it, too, by supporting extensions of Federal power over the states in issues where the racial question was not involved. . . .

"Our vacillations and uncertainty on other states rights issues have now placed us in grave danger of coercive legislation by the Congress."

The letter is being widely circulated in the South as part of the drive to set up slates of electors pledged to an as yet unnamed candidate. Such petitions are already being circulated in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Louisiana, and preparations for similar campaigns are under way in several other states.

Sourwine's Joust With Adlai: Jay Sourwine, former chief counsel to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, crossed swords last week with Adlai Stevenson. Sourwine, candidate for Democratic nomination to the U.S. Senate from Nevada, wrote the Nevada delegates:

"At the meeting of the Nevada delegation with Governor Stevenson, I sought opportunity to ask the governor some leading questions involving Communism and internal security."

Stevenson's answers show, Sourwine said, "that he favors making it more difficult to get rid of a subversive in government than to fire an incompetent or crook," and "that he thinks it both possible and honorable for a nation to be 'neutral' between Communism and anti-Communism."

Sourwine's final thrust was that Stevenson "favors admission of the Chinese Reds in the United Nations, and the expulsion of the National Government of China." Stevenson's chief aide, William McC. Blair, replied that Stevenson had said "he opposed admission of Red China, and always opposed it." In Blair's version, Stevenson qualified his denial by adding that "it might be unwise to irrevocably tie our hands on the question forever, however, meaning for the next fifty or 100 years."

Sourwine replied to Blair by releasing the verbatim exchange;

Question: "Would you agree that the question of granting credentials to Mao Tse Tung's government by the United Nations is a matter of representation, rather than one of admission?" *Answer:* "Yes."

"A matter of representation" — meaning recognizing one government rather than another — is a question that would be settled in the General Assembly, where there is no veto power, rather than in the Security Council. Similar remarks have already been made on this subject by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

Sourwine adds that Stevenson went on to say: "We are not just keeping Mao out, we're keeping the Chinese people out."

Reds at Your Fingertips: The Senate Government Operations Committee has produced a volume that will be of untold value to anti-Communists everywhere. A massive guide to all *Congressional Investigations of Communism and Subversive Activities* from 1918 to 1956, the 400-page document offers quick reference to every witness who ever testified in one of these investigations. Compiled at the suggestion of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, this book promises to be a standard work in every anti-Communist library.

Copies can be obtained by writing to the Government Operations Committee, Room 249, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C. Ask for Senate Document 148 — free while they last.

Letter from GERALD P. NYE, Former U.S. Senator from North Dakota: "HUMAN EVENTS is bringing to me each week the only undertaking of my acquaintance which is so completely and objectively American in approaching current questions and interests. Both the News and Article sections are refreshing weekly dessert. Too bad they cannot be presented regularly in every newspaper in the land. That would make for saner thinking and planning in our grapple with domestic and international vexations."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Our Minneapolis correspondent reports that in Minnesota they have a saying, culled from long experience: "You don't have to know Stassen very well to dislike him." Today virtually every person who has been a GOP member of Congress since Stassen's governorship, as well as a large number of his former lieutenants, are his bitter enemies. A taste for the "double-cross," an overwhelming ego, and a pathological ambition have marked Childe Harold's career.

As soon as he became governor in 1939, Stassen determined to become keynote speaker at the 1940 convention. He solicited the aid of the Minnesota managers for Taft, Dewey, and Vandenberg and in exchange promised "neutrality." Once named, however, the Willkie men easily persuaded him to break faith and become their convention floor manager.

When still in his teens, the Childe set himself a time-table: he was to be Governor by 30 and President by 50. He was a year late in becoming Governor, and still has a year to go on his bid for the White House. Ambition, the poet said, should be made of sterner stuff.

STASSEN'S CLIMB FROM 1930, when he was elected Dakota County District Attorney, to 1938, when he won the Governorship, was in large part owing to a continuous stream of good publicity written by Joseph H. Ball, St. Paul *Pioneer Press* political reporter. Stassen appointed Ball to the U.S. Senate in 1940, and Ball was Stassen's campaign manager for the 1944 nomination. But in 1948 Stassen was cool toward Ball's race for the Senate. Ostensible reason: Ball had come out for FDR in late 1944. But the more important reason was that Ball, in defiance of Stassen's wishes, helped write the Taft-Hartley Law at a time when Stassen was chummy with the CIO. (While Governor, Stassen had approved a law which the unions called "The Stassen Slave Labor Act." By 1952, he was claiming to be the only candidate who could get the support of union leaders.)

This flip-flop of political interests, with Stassen bidding a former friend goodbye, had by this time become standard repertory for the eager beaver from the gopher state. C. Elmer Anderson, who had been active with Stassen in the State Junior Chamber of Commerce movement in pre-governorship days, was Stassen's lieutenant governor for his first two terms. Then he was dumped in favor of Thye, who went on to become governor. Stassen persuaded Henrik Shipstead, Farmer-Labor Senator, to run on the Republican ticket in 1940 to help Stassen's campaign for re-election. In 1946 Stassen dumped him — again in favor of Thye, who then became Senator.

In 1943, Stassen resigned as governor to become a naval officer; in 1944 he announced that he was available to be "drafted" by the GOP convention; if nominated, he said, he would "resign" to campaign for the Presidency. Other GI's wondered at the time just how you went about "resigning" from service in a World War.

Returning after VJ Day, Stassen set up an office in Washington "to advise Representatives and Senators (some of whom had been in Government before he was born) on how they should vote on pending legislation." Receiving no queries, he closed up shop after a few months.

THE YEAR 1948 WAS STASSEN'S BIG CHANCE. So much so, in fact, that *Business Week,* in its issue of April 17, 1948, said: "Your next President: Harold E. Stassen. Two months before Philadelphia, six months before Election Day, it looks as if you can say that." For one and a half pages, *Business Week* told its readers what they could expect from a Stassen administration (Vandenberg was to be Secretary of State, etc.). This estimate was based on Stassen's primary victories in Wisconsin and Nebraska, along with a semi-victory in Maine, where the then-dazzling boy wonder had collared seven out of 13 technically unpledged delegates.

Two mistakes halted the Stassen bandwagon. The first was Harold's decision to test his strength against Taft in Ohio. Picking his spots carefully, Stassen contested 23 spots in the 53-man delegation. He went after one at-large spot, and chose the rest on the basis of districts with heavy CIO membership. He had made a secret deal with the CIO bosses to defeat the co-author of the Taft-Hartley Act. Having loaded his dice carefully, Stassen gambled — and lost. With the primary in progress, the AP reported, May 5, 1948: "Most politicians have said Stassen must take ten delegates here or have his Ohio foray called a failure." Stassen took nine.

Stassen's second mistake was his debate with Dewey. Listeners recoiled when Stassen began by slyly calling attention to his war record and Dewey's lack of same. The debate degenerated into an argument over the contents of the Mundt-Nixon Bill. Dewey made it appear that Stassen actually didn't know what the bill was about, and that by supporting it, Stassen was virtually "surrendering" to Dewey's position that the Communist Party should not be outlawed. Consensus was that Dewey won — after Stassen had clamored long and loud for a debate. He lost the Oregon primary — which had been decisively his, according to Oregon newspaper polls conducted before the debate.

AFTER THE ELECTION, STASSEN accepted the Presidency of the University of Pennsylvania. Hardly in office, he antagonized the trustees by seeking control of the state GOP. He backed candidates Jay Cooke for governor and John Kunkel for senator in the 1950 Republican primaries. Both lost.

In 1952 when Ike seemed hesitant, Stassen threw in his hat. Conservative GOP leaders in Minnesota pleaded with Taft to enter his name there, but "Mr. Republican" refused to violate his rule of not contesting with favorite sons. With his name on the ballot and with an organized campaign, Taft probably could have won the primary. Beating the leading favorite son in his home state, Taft might have then gone on to win the nomination. As it was, a hostile majority, in effect, repudiated their former governor. Stassen won the primary, but the figures tell how: Stassen received 128,134 votes; a write-in campaign for Ike promoted by the Cowles-owned Minneapolis dailies netted the General 106,788 write-in votes; Taft drew 23,966 spontaneous write-ins.

When the first ballot at the convention fell just short of nominating Eisenhower, Childe Harold switched the Minnesota vote. His reward has been a succession of posts with the present administration, where he has done little more than make himself a persistent thorn in the public flesh.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION to HUMAN EVENTS for new subscribers only: 6 weeks for $1.

Yearly rate, $10; 6 months, $6; 3 months, $3.

By first class mail, $12 a year; by airmail (including APO and FPO) $14 a year. FOREIGN: by regular mail, $13 a year; airmail, $18.

Allow us 2 weeks to process new subscriptions and changes of address.

1955 Bound Annual Volume with complete Index $15. All Bound Volumes for years prior to 1955 have been sold.

The Declaration of Independence opens: "When in the course of HUMAN EVENTS . . ."

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor and Publisher*
JAMES L. WICK, *Executive Publisher*
Contributing Editors: FRANK CHODOROV, WILLIS J. BALLINGER

HUMAN EVENTS, 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C., is a weekly newsletter reporting from Washington on politics, business, labor and taxes. It was founded in 1944 by Frank C. Hanighen. Published usually in two sections: a 4-page news section and a 4-page article section. Entered as second class matter at Washington, D. C. Copyright 1956.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Volume XIII, No. 32 HUMAN EVENTS August 11, 1956

Article Section I

THE BEDSIDE QUIZMASTERS

By HANDICAPPER

AS ONE WHO used to be a newspaperman himself, I must be going squeamish. At any rate, that front page picture on Page One of the New York *Herald Tribune* showing Maj. Gen. Leonard Heaton, who operated on President Eisenhower, giving a chalk-talk on Ike's insides before Washington's Corps of Correspondents, just about threw me. As the illustrious surgeon pointed out the newsworthy sections of Ike's lower alimentary canal, the idea dawned on me that the End of an Era was now official. The reference, of course, is to what you might call the Era of Good Taste — at any rate in contrast to the Age of Unabashed Vulgarity which we are now entering.

As a representative of an old school, no member of which would dream of asking another member how much he lost on Fabius that bad day at Delaware Park, I shudder to recall that "press conference." Nevertheless, a brief excerpt from the more repulsive moments of the clinical catechism may illustrate the depths of the depravity which we are enduring in the name of "The People Must Be Told"; to wit:

> *Q.* How large is the abdominal opening, Sir? *A.* This opening between the small intestine?
>
> *Q.* The incision? *A.* The incision? Approximately — oh — six inches.

Want some more?

> *Q.* Is scar tissue involved, Doctor? *A.* Scar tissue? Yes. In the wall of the bowel.
>
> *Q.* Actually cut that off, Doctor, or just bypass it? Do you try to close off that portion? *A.* We do not close it off. It was done in continuity.

I suppose those of us who still regard privacy as the right even of a public man when in hands of the surgeons ought to be grateful that the throng of cowled scientists who surrounded that operating table did not include at least one enterprising journalist with a tiny camera concealed beneath his tunic. This will undoubtedly come, along with a frightful row among the inkstained minions of the press, when a President's chest Xrays are given exclusively to the *New York Times* instead of being released simultaneously to all.

These grisly diagnostic clinics are doubtless intended to point the contrast between the frank and open Republican method of handling sick presidents and the Democratic practice of 1944 when a dying FDR was stimulated up to the point where he looked about 4 per cent as healthy as President Eisenhower does now. In racing, there would have been a saliva test and a disqualification, and all concerned would have been barred from race tracks for life. But the morals of politics are different. If the American voter enjoyed half the protection against fraud that is given the two-dollar horseplayer, our public life would be the wonder of the age. In a way, of course, it is.

Since 1944 nobody would take exception to the right of the public to know the physical condition of a President. But in my book that doesn't include a press cross-examination of the doctors in charge.

As a matter of fact, these elaborate build-ups defeat their own ends. Despite the frank revelation of every detail of the Eisenhower therapy, rumors still circulate that we are not being told the truth, that "ileitis" is another name for something more serious, and that the President is being led to the sacrifice to save the nation from Nixon. On the other hand, in 1944, few suspected that Roosevelt was a sick man, despite the news pictures from Yalta. Even today, if HUMAN EVENTS prints this, the editors will receive angry letters stating that until an hour or two before his death, Mr. Roosevelt was in the pink.

IN President Cleveland's glorious day, secrecy in such matters was accepted as a matter of course. I agree that in President Cleveland's day, a President could, with impunity, issue a proclamation which included the statement that strikers who resorted to violence "cannot be regarded otherwise than as public enemies." Nevertheless, in the spirit of an antiquarian recounting the strange customs of an extinct Aztec tribe, I offer the case of Grover Cleveland's operation.

Published weekly at 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
Copyright 1956 by HUMAN EVENTS, INC.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On June 18, 1893, an examination of a growth in the President's mouth was diagnosed as malignant. According to Robert McElroy, Cleveland's biographer, "The President accepted the verdict but insisted on absolute secrecy, as he feared the effect which an announcement of his peril might have upon the already alarming financial situation." So the operation was performed at sea on Commodore Benedict's yacht on July 1. "The entire left upper jaw . . . from the first bicuspid tooth to just beyond the last molar" was removed.

This was a serious operation but it was followed by no press conference [*Q.* How many teeth would you say he has left, Doctor? *A.* How many teeth? I'm afraid we neglected to count them.].

Quite the contrary, the news of President Cleveland's operation didn't leak out until September, when an English newspaper printed an account of it by one of the doctors. Even then the President's friends did their best to deny the story. Cleveland himself — instead of apologizing for failing to provide gallery seats for newspapermen during his ordeal — denounced the leak, in a letter to Ambassador Bayard in Berlin, as the result of "a most astounding breach of professional duty on the part of a medical man. I tell you this in strict confidence for the policy here has been to deny and discredit his story."

Curiously enough, this doctrine that the President's bowels belong to the people is not applied as rigorously to his official acts. I am prepared to lay 8 to 5 that the journalists who demanded to know just what the surgeons did to President Eisenhower's intestinal tract were not equally energetic in their endeavors to learn who in the Eisenhower Administration was holding out information concerning the commissioning of that Fifth Amendment dentist, Dr. Peress. More than likely these amateur pathologists were then engaged in cross-examining the President as to when he was going to "break openly with McCarthy." The few pressmen who have indicated curiosity about the Administration's attitude on trading in strategic materials between our allies and Red China are not too highly thought of by their tonier "Eastern" colleagues. But on questions like, "Did he have a barium meal?" they can be relied on to be definitely on the ball.

IN AN Age of Irrelevant Vulgarity, few will be concerned about the dignity of the Presidential office, except when a false approximation of same is invoked to justify some Administration underling in withholding important information from Congress — the Enemy, in "liberal" circles. But my Nineteenth Century notions of the dignity of high office are really clobbered by the President's press conference as now carried on.

Here is the President of the U.S.A., whose every utterance is supposed to mean something, standing like a suspect in the morning line-up at the local detective bureau, while a mob of headline seekers shoot at him questions like "Why do you spend so much time with Billy Graham?" (That is a real one.) President Eisenhower is too good-natured to retort "I ain't sayin'" and so he gets into trouble with things like his off-the-cuff remark on "neutralism," which must have delighted India's Krishna Menon as acutely as it pained John Foster Dulles, who made things worse by elucidating the un-elucidatable.

But why should a President be expected to make off-the-cuff comments on important matters? President Calvin Coolidge also had press conferences, but he insisted that the questions be submitted to him in advance, and in writing. Holding in his hand a pile of little cards containing the correspondents' questions, Cal was not above dealing from the bottom of the deck. If by some inadvertence he read aloud a question which he did not choose to answer, he simply said that he did not choose to answer it!

Strange as it may seem to bright young liberals, people in the days of Cleveland and Coolidge probably knew at least as much about what went on in politics as the average man knows today. Only in those days, intellectuals did not think that everybody had to talk the same way. Furthermore, they didn't mind missing a Presidential exploratory operation if they could get the facts about Venezuela or the war debts.

People today are probably just as smart as they ever were, but a generation informed by Mr. Dooley, Mark Sullivan, Sam Blythe and maybe Paul Anderson can't help looking smarter than one enlightened by — well let's keep names out of this! I do have a horrid suspicion, however, that people may deserve the columnists and bedside quizmasters they get.

Additional copies of this 2-page Article: single copy 20¢ (coins, not stamps); 10 copies $1; 25 copies $2; 100 copies $5; 500 copies $20; 1,000 copies $30. In 5,000 lots $20 per thousand.

HUMAN EVENTS was founded in 1944 by Frank C. Hanighen. *It is published weekly at 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.,* and reports from Washington on politics, business, labor and taxes. It is usually published in two parts: a 4-page news section and a 4-page article. $10 per year.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS, new subscribers only: 6 weeks for $1.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Volume XIII, No. 32 HUMAN EVENTS August 11, 1956

Article Section II

HOW TO TEACH JOHNNY TO READ

By FRANK CHODOROV

IT WASN'T that her Johnny could not read. That was disturbing enough, after a year in public school, but she was sure that she could help him overcome this deficiency. What bothered her, when she tried to teach him the rudiments of reading, was his peculiar aversion to the printed word. He hated the sight of a book. He wasn't mentally backward, to be sure, for in other matters, such as play, getting along with children and general curiosity, he was at least on a par with other six-year-olds. Why did he set up a resistance to books?

After some gentle maternal prodding, she got to the bottom of Johnny's trouble. His inability to master letters put them in the category of an enemy, a bogey man, something to be avoided. Yes, he liked to hear her tell him a story, but he would not tolerate her reading one from a book, the symbol of his inadequacy. Something had to be done about that.

The distraught mother had heard about a couple of teachers who claimed to have a remedial method for poor readers, something called The Phonovisual Method. The literature of their school, The Primary Day School, said that the method was not only remedial, it was preventive. What else was there to do but to look them up?

Fifteen years ago three women, a first grade teacher, a former teacher of the deaf and a speech-correction teacher, became troubled over the reading and spelling failures coming out of the public schools. Parents were likewise disturbed. That is to say, a need had been created by the exclusive use of the "sight" method of teaching reading. The modernists, confronted by what seemed to them difficulties brought about by the traditional phonetics method, blandly abolished it, rather than apply themselves to a mitigation of these difficulties. They had another method for teaching reading, well-supported by theory that had never been put to the test. It failed. Children went through all the school grades without ever mastering the basic tool of learning. Thus came the need for remedial training. In a free society, when a need arises, so does a supplier.

Two of the three teachers mentioned worked out a remedial method in which, as the name implies, oral phonetics is supplemented with visual expression; the child learns the sound values of letters not only by ear but also by eye. The third member of the triumvirate, a first grade teacher, tried out the system in her class and met with striking success. That is quite understandable, for the system is as easy as it is logical. But, it calls for some discipline, the bugaboo of "progressivism." The child is required to apply himself for thirty minutes each day to phonetic training and an-

Published weekly at 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
Copyright 1956 by HUMAN EVENTS, INC.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other half hour to "sight" reading. That is not too much for the child mind, especially when the learning is turned into a game with a goal to attain. The children liked it.

It is needless to say that while individual teachers and principals, to whom the system was demonstrated, approved it, the educational leaders did not; they were wedded, for better or worse, to their theory. There was nothing else to do then but to offer The Phonovisual Method to the public by way of a private school. Thus came The Primary Day School.

THIS IS a half-day school. Aside from the hour put in each morning in learning how to read, the children spend the remainder of the time on regular first or second grade studies or activities. By the end of the second year, the purpose of the school is accomplished; the children are well-prepared to carry on their learning in other schools.

The faculty is characterized by a marked devotion to a purpose. Though the regimen is well-defined, there is no slavish dependence on methodology; each child is helped over difficulties as they appear. The helping hand takes the place of the disciplinarian. It may be that these teachers have had previous training in pedagogy, but it seemed to this observer that any teacher could qualify quickly on this method. The idea of The Primary Day School could be spread almost overnight.

The story of The Primary Day School is characteristic of the saga of free enterprise. It was started on the proverbial "shoestring," and as is usual with such enterprises, its course was difficult. The faith of the entrepreneurs in the value of their product was all that kept the school alive.

At the time when the mother of the Johnny who hated books got in touch with the operation, there were grave doubts that it could be kept going. A group of parents set about raising capital for an adequate establishment, which was not too difficult since the product offered is in considerable demand.

The Primary Day School now has a small but well-equipped building of its own. Although it is situated off the "main line," patronage is as much as the school can handle; in fact, the school suffers from an excess of applications.

If parents or educators are interested in the problem of teaching children how to read, inquiries sent to The Primary Day School, Box 5625, Washington 16, D. C., will be answered. The idealists who started this venture are just as anxious now as they were at the beginning for parents and teachers everywhere to investigate their method, with the hope that it may be put to the test. They are confident The Phonovisual Method will obliterate the national scourge: "Johnny can't read."

Additional copies of this 2-page Article: single copy 20¢ (coins, not stamps); 10 copies $1; 25 copies $2; 100 copies $5; 500 copies $20; 1,000 copies $30. In 5,000 lots $20 per thousand.

HUMAN EVENTS was founded in 1944 by Frank C. Hanighen. It is published weekly at 1835 K Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and reports from Washington on politics, business, labor and taxes. It is usually published in two parts: a 4-page news section and a 4-page article. $10 per year.

TRIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS, new subscribers only: 6 weeks for $1.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED